

# critical digest



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## This Week in NYC

Off Broadway commenced its most hectic season. 16 Off Broadway productions have already listed Sept opening dates, including the two new productions and the two revivals due this week, and several more are expected. While on Broadway the only entries will be From the Second City revue Sept 26 and Purlie Victorious Sept 28.

## Plays

Mr. President a new musical comedy with lyrics and music by Irving Berlin, book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse to be presented next fall by Leland Hayward. A Shot in the Dark is new title of Harry Kurnitz adaptation of Marcel Achard's "L'Idiot" previously called "The Naked Truth" and "The Maid's Room."

Ted Mann and George C Scott to produce two Broadway plays this season. General Seeger, Ira Levin's adaptation of the novel to be directed by Scott in Dec, and Great Day in the Morning by Alice Cannon to be directed by Jose Quintero with Scott and his wife Colleen Dewhurst in Mar... A Passage to India London hit adaptation of E M Forster novel by Santha Rama Rau to be presented in Jan by Theatre Guild-Robert Fryer-Lawrence Carr, Tony Richardson director.

## Players

Janet Margolin, 18 year old "prop girl" at NY Shakespeare Festival, picked from 200 applicants for title role of Daughter of Silence Nov 30... Virginia Vestoff subbing for ill Elisabeth Seal, Irma La Douce... Alan Manson signed for Gideon... Julieen Compton and Louise Troy added to A Shot in the Dark... Boris Tumarin and John Balzac joined The Garden of Sweets. Balzac is new name of Off Broadway actor John Heldebrand who changed his name due to difficulty in spelling... Rita Gardner, recently of The Fantasticks, to make Broadway debut in A Family Affair Feb 8, directed by Word Baker... Claudia McNeil to star in A Place Without Twilight.

## NYC Calendar

Rhinoceros-Longacre 9/11  
Leo Kerz production of Ionesco's play re-opens for limited run prior to nation tour with Zero Mostel. Alfred Ryder replaced Ralph Meeker.

Krapp's Last Tape and The Zoo Story- East End (85 E 4) 9/12.  
Richard Barr-Clinton Wilder present revival of twin-bill of Beckett and Albee short plays with Donald Davis, William Daniels, Ben Piazza. Both directed by Alan Schneider.

The Connection- Living Theatre (530-6th Av) 9/12. Julian Beck - Judith Malina re-open first of three bill repertory following European tour. In the Jungle of Cities 9/26, Many Loves 10/3.

Cockeyed Kite- Actors Playhouse (100 7th Av S) 9/13. William Nichols-Van Varner present new play by Joseph Caldwell, directed by Neil McKenzie with Jerry Pagano. Last week Dorothy Dill and Peggy Pope replaced Elizabeth Wilson and Julie Bovasso.

I Want You- Maidman (416 W 42) 9/14. Ted Flicker-Joseph Crayhon-Sam Gelfman present new musical comedy with book by Stefan Kanfer-Jess Korman, music and lyrics by Crayhon, Kanfer, Korman, directed by Flicker with Joshua Shelley, Al Mancini, Ed Crowley.

## Playhouses

Biltmore Theatre to return from TV to legit starting Dec 21 with Age of Consent. \$185,000 refurbishing job included enlarging of house from 979 to 1120 seats... Hudson Theatre reported sold by NBC for \$1,600,000.

## Drama Desk

Theodore E Kalem succeeded Louis Kronenberger, Time. Kalem who has been a Time book reviewer for 10 years, will enlarge Off Broadway coverage of weekly.

## Off Broadway

Harlot's House a new play by Emil Belasco to be presented Sept 29 by Peter Petrello- Ernie Schacter, staged by Gene Wesson with Eli Mintz, Jake LaMotta... Saroyan twin-bill of Across the Boards on Tomorrow Morning and Talking to You to be presented Oct 9 by Sheldon and Barry Gordon, directed by Arthur Storch... Another Evening with Harold Stooness a spoof of Off Broadway revues by G. Adam Jordan, Fred Muller, Jeff Harris to be presented Oct 9 at Gramercy Arts... O Marry Me musical version of "She Stoops to Conquer" switched from Sept 25 to Oct 20, Michael Howard director.

Francis Ingalls and Collette Wolff to be featured in Misalliance Sept 25... Thomas Barbour signed for The Thracian Horses Sept 27... Blanche Yurka to be guest star in Equity Library Theatre's The Corn is Green Sept 30... Carol Teitel left Under Milkwood to join Journey to the Day.

## Special Events

The Mime and Me program of Lionel Shepard being given Mondays at 9 PM and Fridays at 11 30 PM at Provincetown during Sept... Volpone free outdoor production staged in Commedia dell'Arte style by Michael Alaimo presented Sept 9-17 at East River Amphitheatre.

## Broadway Business

Variety reports Labor Day holiday drop in business at most shows with biggest losses at Do Re Mi and All the Way Home. Sell-outs continue at Carnival, Mary Mary, Sound of Music.

## Theatre Ad Notes

Camelot cast and director Moss Hart featured in Nov. Smirnoff Vodka ads... "Vote for Fiorello" display ads appeared on NY Primary Election Day.

# DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

The Pirates of Penzance-Phoenix (187-2nd Av) 9/6. 6 pro- and 1 mild con- Herald Tribune- filed on revival of Gilbert & Sullivan operatta presented by Norris Houghton- T. Edward Hambleton, staged by Tyrone Guthrie and Norman Campbell with Marion Studholme, Eric House and Andrew Downie . Guthrie production first staged at Stratford, Ont will appear for limited seven week NYC run prior to touring US and England. Majority approved most elements with some mild complaints, while sole dissenter felt director made too much fun at expense of authors in second act. Pro side headed by Taubman, Times, praised production with music integrated admirably with the action, excellent cast, inventive direction. Times man urges visit of Canadian prepared G&S as a happy tradition. Chapman, News, raved over spirited, stylish production with its able and charming company, and admirable chorus. Coleman, Mirror, applauded tip-top revival, high- spirited, intelligent tuneful entertainment at reasonable prices. Watts, Post, recommended fresh, bright, lively, dexterous, most pleasant production, though he felt that Guthrie toward the end of the evening went a trifle too far in his staging and suggested he was mocking the operetta instead of helping its playfulness. O'Connor, Journal American, enjoyed second act better than first when Guthrie began to get gentle spoofing of the original with the well-organized company. His overall verdict-captivating. Alpert, World Telegram & Sun, rated it great fun and very special, with the fun derived from its sprightliness, warmth and energy. Sole con voter, Kerr, Herald Tribune, feared Guthrie put the horse before the D'Oyly Carte. While reviewer enjoyed many of the inventive touches and good things in the first act, he felt that in the second act the director was funny at the expense of Gilbert & Sullivan, disimproving what is perfect, kidding some sublime kidders who do not yet require patronage.

## NYC FUTURE CALENDAR

Happy Days- Cherry Lane 9/17...One Way Pendulum- East 74 9/18...Greek Tragedy Theatre- City Center 9/19... Opening of a Window-Theatre Marquee 9/20...Ghosts-4th St 9/21...Misalliance- Sher Sq- 9/25...From the Second City- Royale 9/26...Hi Paisano- York 9/27...4th Ave North- Mad Av 9/27...Thracian Horses- Orpheum 9/27... Purlie Victorious- Cort 9/28...Harlot's House ( Off ) - 9/29...Corn is Green- Masters 9/30.

Sap of Life- 1 Sher Sq 10/2...Do You Know the Milky Way - Barrymore 10/2...Sail Away- Broadhurst 10/3 ... The Caretaker- Lyceum 10/4...Blood, Sweat and Stanley Poole- 10/5...Let It Ride- O'Neill- 10/6...High Fidelity- Ambassador- 10/9...Another Evening with Harry Stoones- Gram Arts 10/9...Saroyan Twin -Bill 10/9...Milk & Honey- Beck 10/10...Everybody Loves Opal- Longacre 10/11 ... How to Succeed- 46th St 10/14...All in Love- 41st St 10/16 ...Diff'rent- Mermaid- 10/17...A Shot in the Dark- Booth- 10/18...A Cook for Mr. General- Playhouse 10/19... O Marry Me- Gate 10/20...Anthony on Overtime- Black - frairs- 10/20...Kwamina- 54th St- 10/23...Yves Montand- Golden 10/24...Look We're Come Through- Hudson 10/25 ... Write Me A Murder - Belasco 10/26...The Buskers - Cricket 10/28...Go Fight City Hall- Mayfair- 10/30 ... Garden of Sweets- ANTA- 10/31...The Apple-Living 10/? ...Time Gentleman Please- Strollers- 10/?



## THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"The Wesker Trilogy" by Arnold Wesker ( Random House \$4.50 ) containing Roots, Chicken Soup with Barley and I'm Talking About Jerusalem reflect the author's exceptional promise and the continuing vigor of the new British stage, recommends Popkin, Herald Tribune..." The Old Lady Says No! and Other Plays" by Denis Johnston (Atlantic-Little Brown \$7.50) containing many plays never presented in US as well as the witty, exciting The Moon in the Yellow River induces regret that the theatre never gave Johnston a vocation, book reviewer notes. The playwright follows no apparent line of development as a dramatist, writes plays spasmodically as the spirit moves him and never establishes any genre as distinctively his own.



## THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

The Three Penny Opera 1928 German original cast album re-issue ( Telefunken ) with Lotte Lenya gives a good feeling of discovering this production, comments Watt, News. It's a remarkable good example of transferring old stuff to LP.

The Quare Fellow Radio Eirann production of the Behan plan ( Spoken Word ) comes across as a play loose in structure and with heavy Irish accents that are sometimes hard to fathom, comments Lask, Times. But it is imaginative in its use of voices, cumulatively moving and both explicitly and by suggestion a strong indictment against capital punishment.



## THEATRE TV COMMENTS

"Plays of Shakespeare" series with Prof Arthur Eastman, Univ of Michigan, began on WOR-TV(NYC) with an illustrated half hour lecture on Macbeth. Gardella, News, thought teacher leaned too heavily on prepared script, but nevertheless thought it was an engaging lecture, a concise, lively analysis of the tragedy. Eastman is no Dr Frank Baxter, TV critic added, but he is articulate, direct and certainly knowledgeable about the subject.



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

**LOOKING BACKWARD...** The most recent emergence of an exaggerated half-truth as an article of faith has to do with the mediocrity of the last theatrical season, states Watts, Post. Critic can't believe that a season which provided such a beautiful new American play as All the Way Home, such striking dramatic imports as Becket, The Hostage, A Taste of Honey and The Blacks, such freshly imaginative musicals as Carnival and Irma La Douce, and as entertaining an old fashioned musical as Do Re Mi can be described as sheer waste. There wasn't enough excellence to make it a memorable year, but it was by no means a time of desperation.

**GLEASON FILE...** Jackie Gleason is discussing a legit version of Barnum to be directed by Orson Welles, hears Kilgallen, Journal American... Gleason is being sought for lead in new drama based on the Fatty Arbuckle scandal to be written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E Lee, notes McHarry, News.

**LOCAL BARDS RATED...** There is little doubt that the Joe Papp free Central Park productions have towered over the Stratford, Conn, series, surmises Crist, Herald Tribune. Latter group continues to live up to Kerr, Herald Tribune, description of it as a "cultural Howard Johnson's." The essence of the Central Park productions have been a restoration of Shakespeare to popularity in its literal sense. It is a matter of imagination, a matter of perceiving how it was and reproducing the essential values. The Stratford folk would do well to come down to Central Park some time for a lesson or two.

**REVIEWERS AT WORK...** Why is it that the top drama critics set exacting standards for Broadway plays, but are as soft as marshmallows when reviewing Off Broadway, asks Davis, News. Some even lend a bit of help to such junk by making kindly guesses as to what the playwright had in mind.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** Of the multitudinous failures of Broadway in recent seasons, the grimmest is the theatre's inability or unwillingness to grapple with the momentous themes of our times, comments Taubman, Times... Best news to hear that Irving Berlin's working on Mr. President, cheers Chapman, News. Irving doesn't need the work, but we showgoers need him... Any drama of suspense that arrives this season will have to fact tough competition from the world news, warns Watts, Post.

**NEW LEGIT NAME...** Broadway area needs a new name, urges Chapman, News. Broadway and 42nd St are crossroads of open gutters for human sewage and the merchants, city government and police have apparently given up hope of a clean-up. The stage district should have a new name; speaking of the "Broadway Theatre" is inaccurate and insulting.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...** A protest against the acoustics in Broadway theatres filed by a Mirror reader.

Avant garde becomes legit this week. The revivals On and Off Broadway of plays by Ionesco, Albee, Beckett and Gelber may succeed or may flop badly. But the fact is that each of these new-wave plays returned for a second production within a one year period in NYC. The revists of Rhino - ceros and The Connection after junkets far and yon buck the noted apathy of ticket-buyers for departed guests that only hit musicals have been able to overcome. The revival of Krapp's Last Tape and The Zoo Story will be a notable first if successful. Except for several Ionesco and Genet plays, the rest of the recent avant-garde hit plays are still running. Thus this is the proper time for theatre fans to start gathering background. They certainly can't fight them, so they may as well join them.

The south side of West 42nd St between 9th and 10th Ave belongs to the theatre fortunes of Irving Maidman. By next year five small theatres and one larger movie house will be constructed on this block. All will have names starting with "M". Maidman, Mermaid, Midway are the names selected for the first three constructed. The field is wide open for more such Broadway- Off Broadway construction. There are plenty of streets and letters of the alphabet left.

There is no doubt that the Broadway area is on the grimy side. The shock of a first time visitor approaching the glamour of theatre through the atmosphere of a third rate amusement park must be great. But the thought and desire to merely change the name of the area isn't going to help matters a bit. Electing a NYC Mayor who will carry out a sweeping rezoning act is the only method open. This will halt the next generation of orange juice stand owners, pin ball machine operators, etc from mucking up the approach to the Broadway theatres. Unhappily none of the current NYC Mayor candidates have felt theatre is important enough to even make such a pledge.

The lesson for today is how the 1962 Seattle Fair which originally had no plans for theatre production will have a jam-packed day and night schedule of children's theatre activities and other theatre events. It was detailed by Agnes Haaga, Univ of Washington, at the recent Children's Theatre Conference of AETA in NYC. The leaders of the children's theatre movement on the west coast noted that no plans for theatre were made for the forthcoming fair except a converted dance hall that might be used on open nights. All of the civic and professional groups in the area who could possibly use a full-fledged theatre in the evenings were contacted. A program of the best children's theatre productions was made up to fill the day-time hours. The various union leaders in Seattle were informed what the group was going to do to entertain their children and asked what concessions they would give the enterprise. Finally Fair and city officials were informed of the completed program. After much arguing it was agreed to construct a beautiful, complete theatre which will be presented after the fair to the city of Seattle. While Seattle may not have the type of anti-cultural public officials which plague NYC, NYC does not have the kind of imaginative theatre workers who attempt and accomplish the impossible.





OUTER  
BROADWAY  
THEATRE  
LETTER

College Theatre

Two Yale School of Drama students won 1961 Forbes Heerman National Playwriting Awards of \$150 each for one act plays presented by Cornell Univ Dept of Speech & Drama. Marvin Hall, NYC, The Old Routine, and Joseph Scott, South Orange, NJ, Nemo.

One place where the American Theatre is flourishing is Wisconsin's Beloit College where Kirk Denmark, founder of the dramatic arts department, has just staged his 200th production since 1948, praises Watts, Post.

Sawyer Falk, 62, Syracuse, NY, Univ Drama Dept head, died in Paris from heart attack... Charles Coburn, 84, requested his ashes be scattered at outdoor stage of Mohawk Drama Festival, Union College, Schenectady, NY as well as at five other spots.

Winter Repertory

Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisc, appointed Tom Patterson, co-founder Stratford, Ont, Festival, as Festival Director. First Fall Drama Festival Oct 17- Dec 23 to feature five plays from repertory of Association of Producing Artists, Ellis Rabb director. Following this a professional resident company will present productions for three weeks each under guest directors. A new managing director will be appointed to replace Ray Boyle.

Charles Playhouse, Boston, opens fifth season Oct 10 with The Great God Brown, Frank Sugrue director-producer. Next program with professional casts from NYC will be twin-bill of The Maids and The Chairs. ...Dallas Theatre Center to present Little Mary Sunshine in Nov as its first musical. Joshua Beene and God, a new play by Texan authors Hal Lewis and Clifford Sage will be presented later this season.

McCarte Guild formed to support varied regional theatre projects of McCarte Theatre, Princeton, NJ, Milton Lyons, managing director.

Arts Centers

Milwaukee Center for Performing Arts \$5 million project planning for 1965 opening of a new theatre and concert hall... Roger L. Stevens named chairman of \$75 million National Cultural Center, Washington, D. C.

Summer Playhouses

Canal Fulton, Ohio, Summer Theatre extended season to 15th week, Sept 12-17 to present Marriage Go-Round with Vivain Vance. Monique with Linda Darnell replaced last week's planned You Can't Take It With You with the late Charles Coburn.

Playhouse on the Mall, Paramus, NJ, extended season through Oct, Current is Sweet Bird of Youth with Farley Granger and Virginia Gilmore. To be followed Sept 18 by Death of A Salesman with Walter Abel, Oct 2 Born Yesterday with Vivain Blaine, Oct 9 Stalag 17.

East End Players, Provincetown, Mass, encouraged by successful season to construct a new playhouse next year.

Road Shows

Elizabeth the Queen and Mary Stuart productions with Eva Le Gallienne and Faye Emerson open 30 wk tour Oct 16 in Northampton, Mass ... The Tenth Man tour opens Sept 26 in Washington, D. C. with Risa Schwartz, Jacob Ben-Ami... Rhinceros tour opens Oct 2 in San Francisco with Zero Mostel, Alfred Ryder... Judith Anderson to tour in program of scenes from Medea, Macbeth, Tower Beyond Tragedy.

London

A Whistle in the Dark a new play by Thomas Murphy, 27 year old Irish teacher, to be presented Sept 11 at Theatre Royal by Robin Fox... The Taming of the Shrew to be added to Aldwych repertory Sept 13 with Vanessa Brown doubling for Stratford's As You Like It. The Affair an adaptation of C P Snow's novel by Ronald Miller to be presented Sept 21 by Henry Sherek with John Clements.

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, to present experimental plays by new authors this season at Arts Theatre.

US Repertory

Theatre Guild-American Repertory Company praised by Buenos Aires critics at opening of The Skin of Our Teeth in new San Martin Theatre.

Paris

Miracle in Alabama is title of Marguerite Duras' adaptation of "The Miracle Worker" opening this week at Hebertot Theatre... Marriage Go Round with Jean Chevrier and Sophie Desmarets due this season.

Germany

Berliner Ensemble Theatre director Peter Palitsch, who was directing Brecht play in Ulm, West Germany, prior to closing of Berlin borders will not return to East Germany... West Side Story American touring company reports poor business due to high ticket prices... My Fair Lady production to be under musical direction of Franz Allers, who will take leave from NY Camelot.

Netherlands

Jack and Jill Lardis, American producers, presenting We're in Dutch Again revue in English in Amsterdam aimed at English tourists. Successful show at Playhouse staged by Peter Powell.

Current Road Tours

High Fidelity- Walnut, Philadelphia 9/14.

Kean- Shubert, Boston, 9/16

Blood Sweat and Stanley Poole-Locust, Philadelphia 9/11

Caretaker-Shubert, New Haven 9/13

How to Succeed, etc-Shubert-Philadelphia 9/4

Kwamina- O Keefe, Toronto-9/4

Let It Ride-Erlanger, Philadelphia 9/7

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



